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KT photo | **Tim Bath**

House of Burgess: Ex-N.Y. Rep. Anthony Weiner strikes again

Former congressman's sexting now at center of election

By Rob Burgess
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I should have known the 2016 election would have something horrible in store at the last moment. What I couldn't have guessed was the return of disgraced former Democratic Rep. Anthony Weiner to take center stage.

As I wrote in my May 1, 2013 column, "Wait, how did you get back in?" Weiner was representing New York's 9th Congressional District when he sent a picture of his, uh, you know, to a follower of his Twitter account. The

photo was quickly removed, and Weiner quickly maintained his account had been hacked. Then, a few days later, he relented. At a press conference he revealed he had, in fact, “exchanged messages and photos of an explicit nature with about six women over the last three years.” Then, as I wrote in my July 31, 2013 column, “Nobody wants to see that,” Weiner’s New York City mayoral campaign fell apart when it was revealed he had sent explicit messages even after the first scandal broke.

Weiner currently is embroiled in a third wave of scandal after it was revealed he had continued sending inappropriate messages, this time involving a 15-year-old. The subsequent investigation has now dovetailed with the FBI probe into Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton’s private email server during her time as secretary of state. Weiner’s now estranged wife, Huma Abedin, is Clinton’s longtime deputy chief of staff and current vice chairwoman of her campaign.

“In connection with an unrelated case, the FBI has learned of emails that appear pertinent to the investigation,” FBI director James Comey wrote in a letter to members of Congress on Friday, 11 days before Election Day.

My wife, Ash, and I had just finished watching the documentary “Weiner” the night before Comey’s letter was sent. The film was shot after the first wave of scandals and during the second. Weiner is obviously a sick person who needs to have his access to technology permanently revoked. And now, his recklessness has thrown the entire election into turmoil.

Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump thrilled to the news of this extension of Clinton's permanent email headache.

"We never thought we were going to say thank you to Anthony Weiner," he said at a Sunday rally in Las Vegas.

This latest annoyance to Clinton comes on top of weeks of WikiLeaks' gradual dumping of the hacked emails of her campaign chairman, John Podesta. It is particularly rich to see those on the right champion WikiLeaks this particular election cycle just because Clinton is on the receiving end this time around. I don't seem to remember this level of support when Chelsea Manning was on trial. (By the way, if you're serious about your WikiLeaks-related support, Manning could use your freshly discovered advocacy more than ever as she was sentenced in September to serve two weeks of her 35-year sentence in solitary after a July suicide attempt.)

As of this writing, WikiLeaks has released 36,891 emails from the Podesta hack alone, with more promised. If you read these emails at an average rate of one per minute starting right now, it would take more than 25 days straight to make it through the entire archive. I simply have not had time to read every single one of those emails, and I'll wager you haven't either. With Russian hackers releasing this volume of information via WikiLeaks no one person is expected to sift through them all, which leaves it to those using specific search terms to string together their own narratives.

I have read excerpts from the Podesta emails, and more than one of these revelations (Wall Street speech transcripts, potential foreign donations, an all-too-cozy relationship with certain journalists) would be the top story if this were any other election. But this isn't any other election. And nothing I've seen either there or in these latest Weiner-related revelations makes me think Trump should instead be the most powerful person in the world.

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